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ABSTRACT

Interviews with five women prominent in their countries are presented in this newsletter. The topic is the progress of women in achieving equal rights and opportunities. The five women talked about how they see women's situation and future in their respective countries. Interviewed were an Indian economist, an English educationalist, a Senegalese nutritionist, a French lawyer, and a Ghanaian professor of linguistics. (JD)

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ANDRÉE MARQUET

THE CONTINUING EFFORT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

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THE CONTINUING EFFORT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Last November, as International Women's Year drew to a close, Unesco held a round table to assess what it had achieved. The participants, eleven women prominent in various walks of life, heard Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, say that it was already clear that IWY was having "the effect of a catalyst and a stimulus, giving the public at large, national authorities and women themselves the opportunity to come to grips with the problems inherent in the status of women...

"As far as principles are concerned, unquestionable progress has been achieved," said Mr. M'Bow. "There are now very few countries, groups or individuals which do not subscribe at least in theory to the principle of equal rights for men and women...

"But where day-to-day life is concerned, unfortunately, the picture is very different. Practice does not go hand-in-hand with theory. The burden placed on women is still infinitely heavier than that borne by men and, quite obviously, a real revolution must be brought about in hearts and minds if the ideals proclaimed on the occasion of International Women's Year are to become a reality...

"For my part," he concluded, "when all is said and done, I believe that the key to any decisive change in the situation lies in women's participation - not only in increased numbers but more energetically and more directly - in social, in economic and, let it be clearly stated, in political life..."

Among the round table participants, five talked about how they see women's situation and future to Pierrette Posmowski, Editor of Unesco Features. The following interviews present the views of Devaki Jain, an Indian economist, Joan Boulind, an English educationalist, Marie Touré N'Gom, a Senegalese nutritionist, Gisèle Halimi, a French lawyer who was chairman of the round table and Florence Dolphyne, a Ghanaian professor of linguistics.

Note to Editors: Photographs are available upon request.

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Devaki Jain lectures in economics at Delhi University and is currently writing a series of research papers on women and development. She became interested in the condition of Indian women when she accepted a commission to write a book about them, the only work she could do while staying at home to look after her two young children. In the following article she answers questions put to her by Erin Faherty and Pierrette Posmowski of Unesco's Press and Audio-visual Information Division.

EMANCIPATION THROUGH ASSOCIATION

Faherty: *Would you say that International Women's Year has had any impact on the developing countries, particularly India?*

Jain: I would straight away say, yes. In terms of identifying the problem, of collecting information about areas we didn't know anything about, an enormous amount of work has been done in India.

Faherty: *Has this led to awareness on the part of the women themselves?*

Jain: I'm afraid not, at least in countries like mine where the large mass of women in the unorganized sector (over 90 per cent of the population) live in far away places, without good communications links. But awareness among these people I think can wait; awareness amongst the elite is important so that they can direct policies, effort and finance towards helping the large mass of women.

Faherty: *You say you've identified the problems. What are they in the main?*

Jain: The outlook of educated women, especially educated urban women, does not coincide at all with that of women in the far-flung rural areas, or even of the poor in urban areas, and the policies, consequently, should be separate. Educated women may be thinking of job opportunities, or part-time employment, or working women's hostels; but these are not the problems of the majority of Indian women.

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For them, daily life is so full of work - both productive work ('a real contribution to the national output', as the economists say) and housekeeping tasks of a very tedious kind (water may take three hours to bring, fuel three hours to gather, food five hours to prepare), as well as cattle-raising, poultry-keeping, and work on the farm - that it is useless to talk to them about their legal status or the divorce laws and the abortion laws.

When you look at the nutritional level of the poor and the morbidity and mortality data, it is women who come off worse. Therefore, any assistance to provide minimum amenities, such as drinking water, that make life less difficult is vitally important.

Posmowski: *Is the death rate among women higher than among men?*

Jain: Yes, except in a few states, and especially among women of reproductive age and young children: girls between one and five die off faster than boys.

Posmowski: *Isn't it a fact that when a peasant society evolves into a technological society, the women lose much of their traditional status and prestige in the community?*

Jain: Take a typical peasant household like the vast majority today in India and most of Asia: everybody has to work, man, woman and child, whether as artisans or as farmers. Then, suddenly, a big factory is set up and an 'urban conglomeration' develops. The man is trained to work in the factory as the breadwinner, while the woman stays at home and keeps house. So you have this alienation the American liberation women talk about: the man doesn't think his wife is important, except to look after the children and provide food, and she feels left out of everything.

It is essential for us in the developing countries to rethink our economic development strategies. Not to accept large scale industrialization which moves employment into the cities and leaves the rural areas barren, but to take employment opportunities to the countryside by improving farming techniques and setting up small-scale industries in the villages: work like the cottage industries or the

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manufacture of watches as in Switzerland, that can be parcelled out into small units, so that the men, the women, and, if necessary, the children work together.

This is the view of many people in Asia today and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is holding a series of discussions about a new development strategy for rural areas. They should have employment opportunities, hospitals, schools, adequate housing, and cultural amenities... so that people shouldn't feel they have to go to the city to lead a gay life. This would have very important implications for women because it would mean that they wouldn't be separated from their husbands.

Posmowski: *Would you say that the big international funding agencies recognize this need for a new kind of manpower - and womanpower - planning?*

Jain: I have a strong complaint against the large funding agencies. They keep on stating in their documents that they want to help the rural poor and are very concerned about inequality in the developing countries. But when they actually come to routing financial aid, they allow their official contacts, which are the governments, to develop industry in much the same way as the highly industrialized countries. They seem unable to emancipate themselves from the conventional theories of economic growth, high productivity, large scale technology and so forth. They should change their measuring criteria. Should one measure growth only in terms of GNP? Why not take into account factors such as the numbers of women employed productively? I should like to see consideration of these issues at a very high level: how women can be helped by changing economic theory.

Posmowski: *In the meantime, what practical steps can be taken to improve women's status?*

Jain: I have a somewhat non-conformist view about this. Many people feel that to liberate women from their traditional and often subordinate rôles, you should organize a big campaign. But I feel that this kind of lecturing and canvassing is not going to deliver the goods, at least in the short run. We have to approach the problem through the back door, and, to me, the back door is association.

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If you associate women according to their trade - women who sell vegetables, fisherwomen and so on - you build up their self-confidence.

Women are much more relaxed with women, especially in traditional societies; they are not used to sitting with men and taking decisions. But the very fact that they belong to an institution which provides economic support gives them confidence. And once they have that they can fight the world!

I know this from an experiment carried out in the city of Ahmedabad. A very fine social worker there decided to associate 6,000 street vendors. These are women who sit on the pavement selling vegetables, or junk, or old clothes. They are a highly assorted group coming from some of the poorest families in the city, usually migrants; they earn very little and lead a marginal life.

Well, each of these women put up 5 rupees which the social worker collected in a fund and deposited in the bank. With the result that the women were able to get proper loans from the government bank, instead of having to rely on the moneylender who charges huge interest rates - 200 or 300 per cent.

I asked these women if this had had any effect on their husbands' attitude towards them. (In these classes of the urban poor, in India as in Europe, it's very common for husbands to beat their wives, to drink and to take a second wife). They said: "Yes, my husband doesn't beat me any more and he can't leave me, because I'm the one who brings the loan from the bank."

That's what I call back-door change. It's much quicker and more effective than a politician saying: "Women, you must rise, you must not allow your husbands to dominate you."

Posmowski: *Is the same thing happening in rural districts, through the co-operatives, for example?*

Jain: The experiment in Ahmedabad is the first, but we want to duplicate it. The men are still the only members of the rural co-operatives, though the women are often the producers, as in

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the milk co-operatives. This is because of the tradition that the woman feels shy. And here there is tremendous scope for adult education, for training these women to take part in meetings and decision-making. Unless they become members of the co-operatives, there's no route for them to become leaders of the community. Some day we must start providing an avenue for the masses of India to come up. And the only way they can do so is through institutions such as these.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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UNESCO PHOTO ALBUM DEPICTS WOMAN AROUND THE GLOBE

Women at work, at prayer, doing such tasks as baking bread, women as they are in everyday life, this is the theme of an album of 50 black and white photographs by Dominique Roger, Unesco's staff photographer.

Miss Roger, who took the photos in just about every part of the world, used a studio for only one, the first, a study of a nude. All the other pictures were taken in homes, streets, fields, factories. This woman's view of women shows us a girl at her sewing machine, a peasant bowed beneath a load of fodder as big as her own body, a mother waiting patiently with her children at the side of her husband leaving for war.

The aim, as Marie-Pierre Herzog says in her foreward, is "neither to abase nor exalt but to provide images which make us think".

And the final text in the album, a quotation from the English novelist Virginia Woolf, expresses a thought that grows as one looks at these photographs:

"In fact, as a woman I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world."

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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Joan Boulind, a teacher with a special interest in the teaching of English as a foreign language, has been active for many years in women's voluntary organizations in Britain. A past president of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, she was co-chairman during 1974-75 with Mrs. Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Social Services, of the Women's National Commission, a government advisory committee which represents nearly 50 organizations - general, professional, trade union, religious, etc. The commission had the task of co-ordinating International Women's Year activities in the United Kingdom. In the following interview, recorded during a Unesco meeting in Paris, Pierrette Posmowski asks her about changes in the status of women in Britain.

DO EQUAL RIGHTS MEAN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY?

Posmowski: *Two new laws which will have an important effect on women and their careers - the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act - came into effect in the United Kingdom at the end of last year. Would you say that these acts were passed during 1975 because it happened to be International Women's Year?*

Boulind: These laws were coming in any case. There have been many attempts to have them passed earlier. 1975 was a very suitable occasion and it would have been a great reproach to us if it had not seen their adoption. But I can't claim that it was solely due to the fact that it was International Women's Year.

Posmowski: *Perhaps the men didn't dare say no?*

Boulind: Let's say it was more difficult to say no. For many years, a great many organizations have been working to stimulate public opinion to support the passing of these laws. We now have a framework within which we can continue our work, because I think no one imagines that this is the end of the chapter.

Posmowski: *The new laws are designed to improve the position of women in the community, their opportunities for training and education, to achieve work of importance and responsibility, to have more equitable social security benefits and pensions and to receive equal pay for equal work.*

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Boulind: The definition which we prefer is equal pay for work of equal value. For one of the difficulties of applying this new law will be to see that justice is done to the women who work in groups, particularly in industry, where there are no male workers with whom to compare them. Unless this is borne in mind, there is a possibility that they will be left out, and a good deal of work remains to be done in the field of job evaluation. Equal pay, moreover, doesn't necessarily mean equal opportunities for promotion, equal training for more responsible jobs and equal fringe benefits, such as the right to secondment for further training and pensions. Prior to this date it has not always been possible for a woman to join a pension scheme at the same age and on the same terms as a man.

Posmowski: *Passing laws is one thing. Getting people to abide by their provisions is another. Is any enforcement machinery foreseen?*

Boulind: Both laws include provisions for enforcement and we expect that a number of cases will be brought before the appropriate tribunals or courts. What we hope, however, is that there will be research into areas where there appear to be particular difficulties or discriminations, as well as a programme of education which will gradually inform people, not only of their rights and of the possibilities open to them, but will also make discrimination more difficult. In the end, a law must depend on the support it commands in the minds of people.

Posmowski: *Although Britain was one of the first countries to admit women to universities and give them the right to vote, until recently women were rather badly represented in certain professions traditionally regarded as male, like medicine and engineering. What is the position today?*

Boulind: According to my latest information, it is rather different. An increasing proportion of women are being accepted into medical schools for training - I believe they now account for one-third of the total enrolment - and a considerable number of women are practising. Studies made by the Medical Women's Federation have shown that a very high proportion of women with medical qualifications are in fact using these qualifications, which at least partly disposes of the

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criticism of wastage of expensive training facilities. But the amount of work that women doctors are able to undertake is directly related to the age of their children, and this raises the central issue of providing adequate, alternative care for the children of working mothers.

As regards women engineers, there are a number of them in the United Kingdom, but not nearly enough, as is the case, I believe, in other Western European countries. Many women who might otherwise have become qualified engineers do not appear to understand fully the content and importance of engineering, or the variety of kinds of training it offers. A great many girls would turn to this profession if it were presented more understandingly and if they did not believe that you have to be a mathematical genius to enter it. But a breakthrough has been made: the world-famous firm of Rolls Royce now has its first woman engineering apprentice.

Posmowski: *What about academic positions? I hear that there are now women vice-chancellors of universities?*

Boulind: This is a very interesting development. Miss Rosemary Murray, the president of New Hall College, is vice-chancellor of Cambridge, an office which is held in turn by the heads of colleges and involves a great deal of responsibility. It is the first time that a woman has held this office in this ancient university.

Another prominent woman, Mrs. Marie Patterson, has just completed her year of office as chairman of the Trades Union Congress. This is not the first time a woman has held the position, but it is a very pleasant reflection that she did so during International Woman's Year.

Posmowski: *Apart from the top rungs of academic life and the trade union movement, there are several women in leading positions in politics - Mrs. Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Social Services, not to mention Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, the first woman leader of a major political party. But they are a very small minority. How about politics at the grassroots level? I mean local government, and trade union responsibility on the shop floor?*

Boulind: Here again, there has been a very welcome increase in the number of women elected to serve on county councils and other bodies which control the local government decisions and the

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spending of public money. And a great many women serve as Justices of the Peace. Increasing numbers are also coming forward to take responsibility in trade union matters. The difficulty for the woman who has a full-time job in industry is that she has less time than most men to attend meetings if she also has to be entirely responsible for her household duties.

Posmowski: *If women today are in jobs formerly regarded as the preserve of men - I believe there are now women jockeys and women building site foremen - the reverse is also true. Some men would like to have jobs traditionally considered as feminine. Doesn't this call for a radical change in attitudes, from primary school onwards?*

Boulind: It begins earlier still, in the family circle, even before the children go to school. At school, not only must there be equality of access to education, which we are fortunate in having in the United Kingdom, but no encouragement should be given to children to select subjects on a sex basis, with one alternative clearly indicated for boys and the other for girls.

I was told recently of a school in Cambridge where, previously, the pupils had been directed, at a certain stage, the girls to cookery lessons and the boys to metalwork classes. When this practice was ended and they were allowed a free choice, there was a mixture of boys and girls in both classes. And, at the end of the year, the top place in the cookery class was won by a boy who went on to a career in the hotel business, while the metalwork group was headed by a girl who is now doing an apprenticeship in a science-based industry. This to me is the right way of doing things. I suspect that we have two much more satisfied and more productive human beings.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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EXHIBIT TO SHOW IMAGE OF WOMAN PRESENTED IN ADVERTISING

Starting in June 1976 a travelling exhibition will present a critique of the image of woman as seen in advertising. The show has been organized by the International Council of Graphic Design Associations in co-operation with Unesco.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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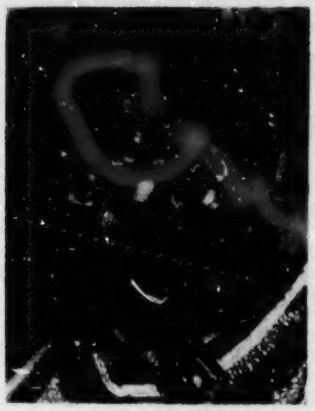

Marie Touré N'Gom is a Senegalese nutritionist whose work in the countries of the Sahel region brings her into contact with thousands of African women. Here she talks to Pierrette Posmowski about their life in terms of traditions and development.

LIGHTENING THE DAILY BURDEN

Posmowski: *You are responsible at the UNICEF office in Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, for an aid programme covering seven drought-afflicted countries of the Sahel: Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Upper Volta. What are conditions like at present in these countries, particularly for women?*

Touré N'Gom: The women's burden was certainly heaviest during the terrible catastrophe we suffered. Among the worst hit by the effects of the drought were pregnant women, nursing mothers and children under five who make up part of what we call the 'vulnerable groups'. Conditions are a little better since it started raining and our efforts are now being directed to a rehabilitation programme for the land, livestock, environment and the people themselves. We advise families on how to balance their diets, helping them as much as we can. But this doesn't mean the emergency is over. We still face many problems, the most worrying of which is the high rate of infant mortality.

Posmowski: *Just how high is it?*

Touré N'Gom: Fifty per cent of the children die before they reach the age of five. It is not uncommon to meet a woman who has had nine children of which only one or two have survived.

The primary cause of infant mortality is malnutrition of

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all kinds, as well as infection and inadequate hygiene in regard to water and living arrangements. Most often the afflicted families have no idea of how to prevent illness and malnutrition. Even the better off don't know the rules for a balanced diet.

Posmowski: *So what counts most for the women is to acquire the knowledge needed to protect their families?*

Touré N'Gom: Yes, to save the children and to lighten their daily burden. And when I say burden I mean a plethora of tasks ranging from housekeeping to working in the fields and including fetching wood and water, doing the marketing, and selling fish when they are not obliged to stay with a sick child at a traditional healer's or a maternity and infant protection centre.

Unhappily, we suffer from a lack of public health facilities; where they do exist, women often do not know how to avail themselves of them or else they may be miles from a centre that could look after their child, provide maternity care or help them deal with health and food problems.

Posmowski: *But you still have your traditional remedies and practices.*

Touré N'Gom: Some of them are excellent, and, happily, are still alive.

Such food as the fruit of the baobab and tamarind trees and cashew nuts, among others, have therapeutic qualities. The fruit of the ditakh bush, for example, is effective in treating diarrhoea and gastro-enteritis. These home remedies, made from local produce, have the added advantage of being cheap. The World Health Organization is very interested in this traditional pharmacopoeia.

On the other hand, some practices have bad effects. Thus village midwives cut the umbilical cord with instruments that have not always been sterlised. Or the woman gives birth lying on the bare ground or even in the fields. In such cases puerperal or tetanus infection is not uncommon. There is certainly a need to study traditional practices and to do so would not require much in the way of funds or personnel.

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Posmowski: *How do you see the future?*

Touré N'Gom: The time for theorizing is past. 1975 was a year for research and planning. 1976 should be a time when the lessons of International Women's Year are brought to bear on the condition of the rural masses.

Action is possible at all levels. We who have had the good fortune to receive a modern education are a privileged minority among African women. What is now needed is to redirect part of our knowledge to aiding rural women in matters of health and hygiene, domestic economy, educating their children and - why not? - taking part in public life, first at village, and later at national, level. We have the cadres - teachers, midwives, physicians, social workers - and we are equipped to bring about some changes within the family. But, as I said, we must go to the villages and discuss, together with the women there, what is good and what is bad in our traditions.

Whatever our field of activity, all of us are in touch in some way or another with women, children and young people. We can help to change their living conditions. But this cannot be done unilaterally. We must co-operate with men also, so everyone concerned understands the situation and is motivated by a similar desire for change. Otherwise, one is bound to fail.

Posmowski: *And government support must be won, too?*

Touré N'Gom: Certainly. But I think that national development plans clearly reflect the will of the governments to improve social and economic conditions. What is needed is that women's rôle in the development effort should be institutionalized - in other words, that it should be given concrete recognition at the planning level.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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Gisèle Halimi, who was born in Tunisia, began her career as a barrister in 1949 by defending Tunisian nationalists of the Neo-Destour then on trial in Paris. Her most celebrated case was probably the defence of Djamila Boupacha, heroine of the Algerian War of Liberation. In recent years she has become a prominent figure in the French feminist movement and a founding member, with Simone de Beauvoir and Jean Rostand, of Choisir (Choice), an association which played a leading rôle in bringing about the liberalization of the French law on abortion. In the following interview, Ms. Halimi, who is married and the mother of three boys, gives Pierrette Posmowski and Francine Vande Wiele of Unesco's Press Audio-visual Information Division, her views of women's special values.

FEMININE VALUES - A CAPITAL TO BE DEVELOPED

Halimi: Women's specific assets derive from the fact that their world is the antithesis of the world of men. And they have been forced to create substitute values for themselves.

Posmowski: *Is that what you meant when you spoke of 'feminitude' at the Unesco meeting?*

Halimi: Yes, I meant that the state of oppression under which many women live causes them to create their own values, which are defensive but not always positive. Among them, you find the responses of the weak - deceit, lying, and so on.

But from this mix of good and bad responses may come other values which are both positive and specifically feminine. These, I believe, will prove to be exactly the contrary of what our opponents call "female nature", and they will be a new contribution from that half of mankind which, up to now, has been dominated, and indeed stifled.

Turning these negative values into positive ones is what the feminist movement is about. The very fact that women talk in a different way when they are among themselves, without men, proves that there is a whole capital of specifically feminine values which has not yet been exploited. These values are clandestine and they are submerged

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in the history of mankind, which, as the word suggests, has always been the history of men.

"Feminitude", for me, means the responses created by oppression and these can become the leaven of our struggle, a dynamic force enabling women to change themselves.

Posmowski: *Picture houses in the industrialized countries are swamped with pornographic films in which women are portrayed as objects of pleasure. Do you think that censorship, such as is now being introduced in certain countries, is an effective way of dealing with this problem?*

Halimi: I am against censorship in all its forms. In my opinion the real problem is to discover the reasons behind the success of these films. A certain form of cultural brain-washing has imposed on the public an image of women utterly dominated by men, a situation which they not only accept but (and there is great insistence on this point) also desire. This fictitious image is propagated with the full panoply of marketing techniques. Pornography is presented as sexual freedom, whereas true freedom is the very contrary of this sort of degradation, since it implies the right to choose, respect for one's partner, shared pleasure, the dignity of both parties. Instead of this, the two factors are confused - for sordid, commercial reasons - and once again the women get the worst of it. We are not likely to see a film like Histoire d'O (Story of O) produced from the opposite point of view.

Posmowski: *Turning to economics, Sweden recently enacted a law providing subsidies to firms employing at least 40 per cent of women on their staff, or, if the profession involved is a feminine one, 40 per cent of men. Do you believe that this sort of regulation can really influence the psychological relationship between the sexes?*

Halimi: Passing equalitarian laws will not magically change people's attitudes. There is always a time-lag between the adoption of a law and an evolution in the way people think. Yet one has to begin this way, and laws providing for the interchangeability of jobs do at least help to spark new mental processes. The Swedish initiative is a positive one, but so recent that we cannot yet judge the results.

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Sweden has carried out another reform which I find very interesting, because it tends to release women from their traditional rôle of looking after the home and children. This is the law concerning parental leave, which allows either the woman or the man, to take leave to look after the child after its birth.

Two of my own friends recently availed themselves of this law: the husband stayed at home after the birth of their baby, while the mother, who holds an important post, went on working. This is an experiment which should be continued, especially since no one is forced into it. If the woman decides to take her maternity leave, there is nothing to prevent her doing so. But it takes two to make a child, so two should share in its care.

Posmowski: *Do you know if many Swedish husbands have decided to take advantage of this parental leave?*

Halimi: I have been given the figure of two per cent. This is an appreciable result when one considers that the law is barely two years old.

In Sweden, too, scholarships for further education are awarded to women who find themselves alone after being divorced or widowed. This seems to me an important step forward, at least as a short-term measure. (When women have become economically independent, they should naturally be treated in the same way as men). But at the present time, a substantial grant means that a woman who suddenly finds herself, at the age of fifty, alone, penniless and untrained for work, is enabled to hold out and learn a profession or trade.

Vande Wiele: *One last question: among practical measures put forward at the Unesco meeting one suggested the creation of an international centre for research and exchanges for women. This recommendation which you yourself tabled in the name of the group Choisir (Choice), was adopted unanimously. What will be the aims of this international centre?*

Halimi: The idea was born when we realised that history, from the most remote times, has been essentially man's history. The story of womankind, of women's ideas, rights, psychology and even identity, has been kept out of sight, or merged with the history of men.

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Of course, you will find a woman's name quoted from time to time as a kind of alibi ... provided it does not steal the thunder from men. You hear of women in the Resistance, of Louise Michel during the Paris Commune ... but scarcely anything is known about the place of women in history or their impact on it.

This would be the task of the international centre for research and exchanges on women. We would set about it first by encouraging the writing of studies and theses on the history of women by means of training courses, as well as organising regular seminars and discussions. Women have a lot to learn in terms of how to take action, speak in public, put over their cause, and work out a strategy different from that used by men.

We also plan to organise research groups on feminine creativity. In this respect, the most archaic and phallocratic ideas are still generally accepted. Women are not supposed to be creative; instead, they procreate. It will be the task of the international centre to discover if this is true. Perhaps we shall find remarkable works produced by women of which we know nothing.

I believe, all the same, that women have created proportionately less than men, because they have always occupied a marginal social and economic position. People create only when they are directly concerned by the important events of their times, and feminine creativity has always been restricted to a very small area conceded by men. The immortal poems written by women were generally love-poems or, when they were laments for war, they wrote not to defend peace as a political phenomenon, but because war separated them from the men they loved.

Finally, publishing will certainly be an important activity of the international centre which should see that all important works by women are published, translated and distributed throughout the world. Among other things, we should provide for a yearbook, summing up everything that has been published during the year on the problems of women.

In the long run, men, too, will benefit from all we are doing in our march towards freedom. For freedom, as I see it, means above all, not oppressing others.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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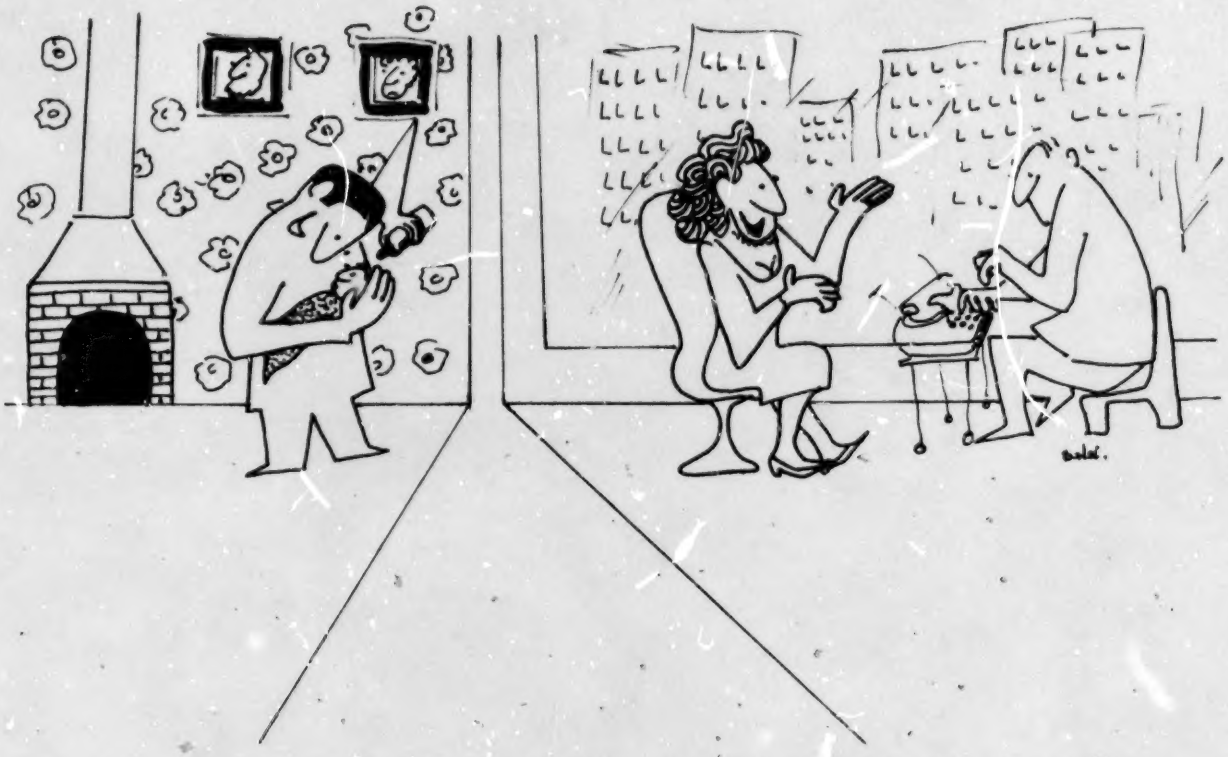

U.N. WANTS MORE WOMEN FOR OVERSEAS JOBS

Qualified women are being sought by the United Nations to work in technical assistance programmes in developing countries.

The jobs, open to women with technical skill and experience, play a vital rôle in the UN's effort to help countries to improve economic and social conditions.

The Technical Recruitment Service of the United Nations, which handles applications for some 70 categories of skills, ranging from administrative reform to welfare programmes, is hoping that far greater numbers of women will apply for positions. Each year, the service appoints some 1,000 technical experts from throughout the world, to work in more than 100 countries, but up till now only a tiny proportion of the jobs have gone to women.

The reason, according to an official, is that "only a very small number of women have been applying. We think that they don't know the opportunities exist".

Women - and men - interested in seeking further information on opportunities within their specialities should write to: The Technical Assistance Recruitment Service, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017, U.S.A.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

Dr. Florence Dolphyne, who teaches linguistics at the University of Ghana, is vice-chairman of the Ghana National Council on Women and Development, a body created in 1975 to advise the government on all issues affecting the welfare of women. At a recent Unesco meeting in Paris she talked to Pierrette Posmowski about the problems raised by polygamy and the rôle of women in decision-making.

EDUCATING WOMEN TO THINK LIKE EQUALS

Posmowski: *Women in Ghana are equal in law, but in practice, as in many other countries, do not various factors make for inequality?*

Dolphyne: Some of the things that make women unequal in Ghana are related to the traditions of our society. One is the institution of polygamy under which a man can have three, four or five wives. In this sort of situation, the status of the woman cannot be equal to that of the husband. Also in some parts of the country marriage systems require the young man to provide a certain amount of money or buy various things before he marries and this is sometimes construed to mean that the woman has been bought and is therefore an inferior partner in the marriage.

Posmowski: *But can't polygamous marriages be banned by law?*

Dolphyne: I don't think it would be advisable at this moment to legislate against polygamy. For one thing polygamy solves a problem for many women, because a fairly rich man can provide comfortably for two, three or four wives. Also women tend to marry much earlier than men and, therefore, ever though there are about the same number of men as women, more women are ready to marry, and so you have polygamy. The authorities realize that if they abolish polygamy outright it will simply revive in an unofficial form where you have one official wife and several other women living in extra-marital relationships.

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One of the reasons why men, even when they are not very rich, still go ahead and marry several women is that they are not always held fully responsible for their upkeep. But if they were obliged to register all their wives and children and made financially responsible for them, the economic pressure alone would tend to minimize polygamy.

Posmowski: *What are the most important problems facing women in Ghana today?*

Dolphyne: The first thing the women of Ghana need is education. Not just formal education, but general education, so that they can learn to discount prejudices which tend to treat them as inferiors. We consider that much of the apparent inequality between men and women in modern Ghanaian society is due to the high level of illiteracy among women. Functional literacy programmes can help them to improve the skills they already have and to acquire new ones, thereby making them more economically independent. There should be a big campaign through the news media and other means to educate parents and young girls on the need for girls to take advantage of the educational facilities available in the country.

In our traditional society, women were highly respected and often participated in important decisions. Now that education is a basic requirement for such decisions, the rôle of women has declined. The Ghana National Council on Women and Development has recommended that as far as possible qualified women should sit on all boards and commissions in fair relationship to men. In fact, a directory of women in the various professions is now in preparation to help select candidates. But the degree of power people wield in decision-making bodies is determined by their level of formal education and if there aren't enough women who are sufficiently well-educated, we really can't insist that they should be represented on decision-making bodies. So education is a top priority in Ghana at the moment.

However, it is not merely a question of providing literacy and vocational training; there must also be improvements in sanitation, child care, nutrition and home and family life. For most of us in the

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developing world, the problems are not quite the same as those in the developed world because often people are just struggling for basic survival: for instance, they don't have good drinking water, or health facilities, or hospitals and so on. A lot of emphasis will have to be put into developing the rural areas and making them more liveable, so that women don't suffer so much.

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U.N. DECLARES DECADE FOR WOMEN

The United Nations 30th General Assembly, which ended in New York last 17 December, has declared 1976-85 the Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace.

Following International Women's Year 1975, the assembly adopted ten resolutions outlining future action for governments concerning women. Among them, Resolution 3522 called for improvement of the economic status of women and for their effective and speedy participation in the development of their countries.

The assembly requested that a team of UN experts be established to draw up terms of reference for an International Institute on Research and Training for the Advancement of Women.

A world conference is also proposed for 1980 to review progress in implementing the objectives of International Women's Year.

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE RECOGNIZES ECONOMIC VALUE OF HOUSEWORK

The Council of Europe has called for recognition of the economic value of women's housework.

The 18-nation council called for women engaged in such work to be given the same kind of welfare protection as workers in other fields in cases of illness, maternity, and old age.

The council called on member nations to report within four years on what measures they have taken to implement such coverage for women.

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MIRO POSTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS PUT ON SALE BY UNESCO

Joan Miro, the Spanish artist, has designed an eight-colour lithographed poster dedicated to human rights. It is now available from Unesco at 30 French francs a copy.

Produced in collaboration with the International Association of Art, it is the second in a series, 'Artists for Unesco'. The first poster, honouring International Women's Year 1975, was by Sonia Delaunay

Miro, a master of vigourous colour and often humourous fantasy of forms, was born in Barcelona in 1893. He contributed two ceramic works, the Walls of the Sun and of the Moon, to the forecourt of Unesco House in Paris.

The poster, which measures 74 x 55 cm. is available from the Division of Diffusion and Promotion of Information, Unesco, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

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UNESCO PUBLISHES GUIDE TO DOCUMENTATION TERMINOLOGY

Unesco has just published a guide to 1,200 basic terms used in documentation in English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. In compiling the guide, particular attention was given to linguistic problems, communications theory, documentary languages, systems analysis and general concepts of electronic data processing.

Priced at 65 French francs, Terminology of Documentation is available from The Unesco Press, Unesco, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME FOR PHILIPPINE SCHOOLS

Promotion of the work ethic - the belief that there is value in any work however humble - is a part of a new programme being introduced into the Filipino educational system.

Starting this June, after their two-month vacation, some 12,000,000 children will return to schools in which innovations are being introduced. The new methods and techniques follow a Unesco-Philippine Government seminar for education officials held in Manila last July.

(UNESCO FEATURES)

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